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**LAWMAKER AU KAM SAN WORRIES THAT FACIAL RECOGNITION IN SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS WILL BE USED FOR 'SOCIAL CONTROL' PURPOSES** P2

**CULTURAL AUTHORITY TOLD IT MUST SPEND MONEY MORE WISELY** P3

**THE OFFICE OF A JAPAN LAWMAKER SUSPECTED OF RECEIVING BRIBES FROM A SHENZHEN-BASED FIRM IS NOW ALSO UNDER INVESTIGATION** P5



**China** A Chinese scientist who set off an ethical debate with claims that he had made the world's first genetically edited babies was sentenced yesterday to three years in prison because of his research, state media said. He Jiankui, who was convicted of practicing medicine without a license, was also fined 3 million yuan by a court in the southern city of Shenzhen. [More on p11](#)

**Philippines** President Rodrigo Duterte continued his attacks on a local television network he's accused in the past of bias, and urged owners of ABS-CBN Corp. to sell before its franchise expires in March. Duterte suggested the media firm's franchise renewal is uncertain. He had earlier threatened to block the network's bid to extend the franchise for 25 years.



**Australia's** Jewish community has slammed an Israeli government decision to promote to the post of health minister a legislator who is suspected of aiding an alleged sexual abuser wanted in Australia. The Israeli government on Sunday appointed Yaacov Litzman as health minister, sparking a litany of condemnations from Australia's staunchly pro-Israel Jewish community.

**Turkey's** main opposition party said yesterday it does not support the government's plans to deploy troops to Libya, saying the move would embroil Turkey in another conflict and make it a party to the "shedding of Muslim blood."

More on backpage

# WANZAI PORT TO REOPEN BY CNY

THE NEW PORT WILL BE OPEN FOR 15 HOURS PER DAY STARTING JANUARY 23 P7



**LRT TRIAL PERIOD EXTENDED ANOTHER MONTH AFTER FAULTS** P2



**HK DEVELOPER DONATES LAND TO OFFSET HOUSING CRISIS** P9

# LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT TRIAL PERIOD EXTENDED UNTIL JAN 31

LYNZY VALLES

**T**HE government has decided to extend the trial period of operation of the newly opened Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) until January after it encountered operation failures on three occasions since its opening to the public on December 10.

The Secretary for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon told the press yesterday that the government requires the LRT company to conduct in-depth investigations of the failures, analyze the causes of the failures, and propose solutions.

He emphasized that if the failure involves management or equipment errors or defects, the company's responsibilities need to be clarified in accordance with the provisions of the contract and handled in accordance with the laws and applicable contractual provisions.

Cheong also claimed that it is normal for a new public transport system to encounter difficulties.

He added that the experimental operation of the Taipa line serves to detect problems and find solutions in order to improve the system.

"The LRT is new to Macau," said Cheong. "We all know that it is a new integrated transportation system. It needs some time to adjust during the experimental period."

RENATO MARQUES



## The experimental operation of the Taipa line serves to detect problems and find solutions

experimental period."

"The SAR government attaches high importance to yesterday's incident and previous incidents. We prioritize protecting the safety of the passengers. When the LRT records an incident, all departments first ensure safety," he added.

Thus, the government had de-

decided to extend the experimental period to January 31.

"The LRT will be free for use until January 31. During the period, I hope the public can use the LRT and provide more suggestions," the secretary said.

As of Sunday, the LRT had recorded three minor issues. The

company was said to have submitted a report to the Transport Bureau on the same day.

It was also announced yesterday at the press conference that the LRT company handled Sunday's incident within 90 minutes and that the LRT operation resumed shortly after.

The LRT was suspended on Sunday at about 1 p.m., reportedly due to a power outage at a site between Cotai West Station and Lotus Checkpoint Station.

The train service between

Ocean Station and Lotus Checkpoint Station was temporarily suspended until 2:35 p.m. During this period, the Operation and Control Center directed passengers safely out of the carriage to the adjacent station platform.

Meanwhile, according to a report issued by Chinese media outlet Cheng Pou, the firefighters did not notify the media regarding their deployment to the LRT, nor have they responded to formal media enquiries.

Questioned by the press as to why no notice was given to the media, Leong Iok Sam, director of the Fire Services Bureau said, "Our staff have been busy recently and have not received one or two calls. We will continue to optimize and follow up."

## WE CORRECT

Dear readers,

Macau Daily Times wishes to correct an error in our article "LRT suspended yesterday after power problem arises" published yesterday, where it is incorrectly stated that a power outage was suspected to have occurred between Cotai East Station and Lotus Checkpoint Station. In fact, the outage was suspected to have occurred between Cotai West Station and Lotus Checkpoint Station. We offer our sincerest apologies to our readers for this unfortunate error. It has already been corrected on our website.

RENATO MARQUES



# Lawmaker suspects CCTV cameras of having 'social control' purpose

**L**AWMAKER Au Kam San is concerned that information captured by CCTV surveillance cameras will be used for the purposes of "social control."

In his interpellation to the government, Au was preoccupied with the possibility for the abuse of information provided by surveillance cameras' facial recognition functions. He said that this possibility existed precisely because of the absence of laws designed to specifically address such technology.

He asked whether this information will be used for "social control" instead of being used to maintain security within the society.

Macau's surveillance law only addresses the collection and processing of fixed cameras or other similar systems, and only prescribes regulations for images and sounds recorded in real-time by closed-circuit video and photographic systems. The law clearly states that the collection of images and sounds shall be limited to

the fulfilment of legal purposes.

The Macau government said that the use of facial recognition in CCTV surveillance camera footage is in accordance with the law. However, Au pointed out that the facial recognition function has no law expressly governing its use at the current stage.

Au pointed out that the security authority does not need to report its use to the personal data protection office, meaning that the security authority will not

be subjected to the personal data protection law for using data obtained from facial recognition systems.

In Au's opinion, the law only restricts the collection of images and sounds from the CCTV surveillance cameras, but does not regulate data obtained through image analysis – in this case, the facial recognition function.

Au also questioned the local government authority as to whether it will transfer any captured information to mainland China. JZ

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (DIRECTOR) Paulo Coutinho paulocoutinho@macaudailytimes.com  
MANAGING EDITOR Daniel Beitler daniel@macaudailytimes.com  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Leanda Lee, Severo Portela, Sheyla Zandonai

NEWSROOM AND CONTRIBUTORS Albano Martins, Annabel Jackson, Anthony Lam, Emilie Tran, Irene Sam, Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, Jacky I.F. Cheong, Jenny Lao-Phillips, João Palla Martins, Joseph Cheung, Julie Zhu, Juliet Risdon, Linda Kennedy, Lynzy Valles, Paulo Cordeiro de Sousa, Renato Marques, Richard Whitfield, Viviana Segui  
DESIGNERS Eva Bucho, Miguel Bandeira | ASSOCIATE CONTRIBUTORS JML Property, MdME Lawyers, PokerStars, Ruan Du Toit Bester | NEWS AGENCIES Associated Press, Bloomberg, MacauHub, MacauNews, Xinhua  
SECRETARY Yang Dongxiao amy@macaudailytimes.com

SEND NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION AND PRESS RELEASES TO: NEWSROOM@MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM WEBSITE: WWW.MACAUDAILYTIMES.COM.MO

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ADMINISTRATOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kowie Geldenhuys kowie@macaudailytimes.com

OFFICE MANAGER Juliana Cheang juliana@macaudailytimes.com

ADDRESS Av. da Praia Grande, 599, Edif. Comercial Rodrigues, 12 Floor C, MACAU SAR Telephones: +853 287 160 81/2 Fax: +853 287 160 84

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COURTESY MACAU NEWS



This file photo shows current Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U in her former role as head of the Identification Services Bureau

## Members of New Basic Law Committee appointed

**T**HE Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has appointed members to the latest iteration of the Macau SAR Basic Law Committee. The body serves to study questions arising from the implementation of the Basic Law and submit its views to the relevant mainland authorities.

The new committee consists of ten people, including five from mainland China and five from Macau.

The Director and the Deputy Director are Shen Chunyao from the mainland and Macau legislator Chui Sai Cheong, respectively.

Chui replaced Susana Chou, the former Deputy Director of the Committee.

The four other mainland members are Zhang Yong, former Deputy Director of the Hong Kong Basic Law Committee, Deng Zhonghua, Deputy Director of the Hong

Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council, Cheng Duanhong, law professor from the Faculty of Law of Peking University, and Zhang Rongshun, Deputy Director of the Liaison Office.

The four other Macau members are Macau lawyer Lei Wun Kong, government-appointed lawmaker Vong Hin Fai, former government-appointed lawmaker and law professor from the University of Macau Gabriel Tong and Wang Yu, associate professor at Macau University of Science and Technology.

These members were nominated jointly by the Chief Executive of Macau, the President of Macau's Legislative Assembly and the President of the Court of Final Appeal.

According to China's regulations, the five Macau members must be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of Macau without a right of abode abroad. JZ

## Cultural authority instructed to spend money wisely

LYNZY VALLES

**S**ECRETARY for Social Affairs and Culture Elsie Ao Ieong U has reportedly instructed the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC) to be cautious about its spending.

As cited in a TDM Radio report, the president of the IC, Mok Ian Ian, said that the office must "be much more careful with every expense," when commenting on the bureau's future spending.

Mok was speaking on the sidelines of the New Year's Eve Concert Opening Ceremony yesterday, heralding the start of an event that will be attended by artists from Hong Kong and Macau.

The budget of the event was said to be around 4 million patacas.

At the Ceremony, Mok explained, "We will review

the expenses. We have had a [goal] of readjusting the expenses." However, for now, the IC head said that there are still no plans to cut the bureau's budget.

This comes after Ao Ieong's predecessor Alexis Tam was accused by Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng of overspending government resources on public projects, the outcomes of which could not be ascertained.

On his first day of work as Chief Executive, Ho said the new government should have greater control over the use of public money.

In an interview with the TDM Chinese channel, Ho addressed his reasons for dropping the former Secretary for Economy and Finance, Lionel Leong, and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Alexis Tam, from the new government.

He then defended his reasons for replacing Tam with Elsie Ao Ieong U, noting that

"Being wasteful is the biggest crime, I would say. Corruption is not the only crime, just one of the elements [to take into account]. But being wasteful is also among the biggest crimes," said Ho, speaking about Tam's tenure as secretary.

Ho recalled that, as the former president of the Legislative Assembly, one of the topics he often addressed and was concerned about was the "waste of public resources."

"Wasting resources is a current problem [from the previous government] and Tam's Secretariat accounted for 35% of the annual budget – at least 30 billion patacas – and yet he was often a target of public dissatisfaction," said Ho.

He then defended his reasons for replacing Tam with Elsie Ao Ieong U, noting that

Ao Ieong is "thinking based on science and logic," the opposite of Tam, who Ho said was more focused on rhetoric, speeches and slogans.

Alexis Tam – who is now the head of the Macau Economic and Commercial Delegation in Portugal, headquartered in Lisbon – was formerly Chui Sai On's Chief of Office before being appointed as the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture in Chui's second term.

In an interview with the Times, political scientist Larry So said that Tam became quite popular while serving in the position, and this aided his subsequent appointment as one of Chui's ministers. "During that time, he was quite popular in the community, especially in the civil organization," So explained.

## CCAC'S TOP OFFICIALS FORMALLY STEP INTO OFFICE

**D**EPUTY commissioners and the Chief of the Cabinet of the Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) officially took office on Friday, according to a statement released yesterday by the bureau.

The Chief Executive order appointing Ao Ieong Seong and Lam Chi Long as Deputy Commissioners was published in the Official Gazette on December 20.

Ao Ieong Seong started work as a prosecutor at the Public Prosecutions Office in September 2013. Meanwhile, Lam Chi Long was appointed as the deputy commissio-

ner-cum-director of the Ombudsman Bureau of the CCAC in the fourth term of the Macao SAR Government.

The CCAC's Commissioner Against Corruption, Chan Tsz King, presided over the inauguration, witnessing the swearing-in of the three officials at a ceremony held at the meeting room of the Headquarters of the CCAC at Golden Dragon Centre.

The Commissioner said he hoped that the personnel of the CCAC would continue to perform duties with dedication and diligence and work in tandem with one another to make the works of the bureau successful. LV

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

## MALAYSIA LACKING FOREIGN HELP IN HUNT FOR ELUSIVE JHO LOW

**M**ALAYSIA'S police are having trouble getting their foreign counterparts to help in the search for Low Taek Jho, also known as Jho Low, the alleged mastermind behind the 1MDB scandal, newspaper Malaysiakini reported.

Inspector-General Abdul Hamid Bador said other countries lacked the sincerity to cooperate, and were even denying Low's presence in their jurisdictions despite Malaysian intelligence indicating otherwise, the local newspaper reported. The police are maintaining their promise to bring back the fugitive financier by year-end.

The billionaire businessman was reportedly hiding out in Macau, Hong Kong and even mainland China for at least brief periods last year, while he was wanted by Malaysian authorities. He was said to have been able to enter Macau despite an Interpol notice, because neither Malaysia nor Singapore had ques-



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ted his arrest from the two SARs. An Interpol notice alone is not enough to obligate local authorities to intervene.

Bringing in Jho Low to face criminal charges in Malaysia would be a major step in the country's renewed investigation into troubled state fund 1MDB, which saw more than \$4.5

billion allegedly misappropriated.

The police have declined to say where they suspect Low to be located or from which authorities they're seeking cooperation, while ruling out the U.S. and the United Arab Emirates. In September, Abdul Hamid said the financier was in a jurisdiction with which

Malaysia has an extradition treaty, and that he was in talks with a party they suspect of protecting him.

Low recently struck a deal with the U.S. Justice Department to return almost \$1 billion of assets to resolve forfeiture cases linked to him. He has consistently denied any wrongdoing. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

## TWO HK RESIDENTS ARRESTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING

**T**WO Hong Kong residents have been arrested for drug trafficking in Macau, the Judiciary Police (PJ) reported yesterday.

The two under arrest are a 17-year-old male teenager and a 47-year-old woman.

Earlier, the PJ received a report that a criminal group had assigned a female drug trafficker to smuggle drugs into Macau. The Customs authorities of Macau and Hong Kong jointly monitored the said woman's entry to Macau from the Outer Harbor Ferry Terminal and found the woman met with the teenager at Calçada de São João.

The woman carried the drugs with her and handed them to the teenager, also in Macau. They were arrested while trading.

In total, the PJ seized 25.48 grams of cocaine from the teenager. The PJ also found drug distribution tools in the hotel room in which the teenager was staying.

The teenage suspect admitted to the PJ that he had taken 3,000 Hong Kong dollars for his accommodation in Macau, and that he was promised further payments if he could sell the drugs. According to the PJ, this is the teenage suspect's first time in Macau, and he agreed to commit the crime because he was short of money.

The woman refused to cooperate with the PJ. She has been visiting Macau each week for the past two months. The PJ is still investigating the woman's possible involvement in other drug cases.

In November, two 17-year-old male teenagers from Hong Kong were arrested in Macau for drug trafficking. The PJ seized 20.82 grams of cocaine from them. One of the involved teenagers tested positive for drugs in a urine test. **JZ**

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**GAMING**

# Accusations mount against Japan lawmaker embroiled in bribery case

**T**HE private political office of a Japanese lawmaker arrested this month on suspicion of receiving bribes from a Chinese company may have violated Japan's Political Funds Control Law,

In a possible violation of the law, lawmaker Tsukasa Akimoto's office is thought to have diverted money from a Tokyo-based consultancy to pay the salaries of his private secretaries, the Japan Times has reported. If so, the funds would need to be marked as "donations", but the lawmaker's funding reports between 2016 and 2018 had no mention of such money.

Lawmaker Akimoto of Japan's ruling party was arrested earlier this month on suspicion of accepting bribes from a Shenzhen-based company looking to invest in the under-development casino industry. The payoffs may have amounted to about 3.7 million yen (\$34,000), the Tokyo Public Prosecutor's



office said, with the bribes including cash, plane tickets and hotel rooms.

According to Bloomberg, the case has dealt a blow to already unpopular plans to open the country to the gaming industry.

Prosecutors unearthed the possibly unlawful paymen-

ts to Akimoto's staff during their investigation of flows of money involving Akimoto between 2015 and 2018, the years in which the bribery was said to have occurred.

Citing unidentified sources, the Japan Times reported that the Shenzhen-based company, which is primarily

an online sports lottery provider, may have approached the Japanese lawmaker in order to turn around its struggling business.

It said that the Chinese company organized a casino-related symposium in Okinawa Prefecture in August 2017, where Akimoto was asked to give a keynote speech. The lawmaker was supposed to be compensated in the amount of 500,000 yen for his speech, but the figure was revised to 2 million yen after it was made known, three days after the speech, that Akimoto would be made a minister overseeing the government's plan to roll out casinos in Japan.

Other ties being investigated by prosecutors include a 3 million yen financial contribution to Akimoto's election campaign in September 2017 and a visit to Shenzhen in December of that year, which included a stop at the Chinese company's headquarters. **DB**

## SENADO LIBRARY TO REOPEN TO THE PUBLIC ON THURSDAY

The Senado Library under the Cultural Affairs Bureau has concluded its renovation works, according to the cultural authority, and will be open to the public again starting this Thursday, January 2. The renovation works included the repainting of the interior walls and the renovation of the power system and air-conditioning equipment. The Library, located in the Municipal Affairs Bureau Building on Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, will be open from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. from Mondays to Saturdays.

## UM HOLDS CONFERENCE FOR ACCOUNTING, BIG DATA RESEARCH

The Faculty of Business Administration of the University of Macau and the Asia Pacific Journal of Accounting & Economics (APJAE) jointly hosted the Eighth Conference of the World Accounting Frontiers Series from December 4 to 6. With the theme 'Accounting and Institutional Infrastructure', this interdisciplinary conference aimed at bridging the academic-practice gap through big data research and the exchange of a wide spectrum of accounting knowledge, according to a statement from the UM. The conference attracted more than 100 academics and industry practitioners from around the world, who shared their insights and exchanged ideas on innovation and development. A total of 56 papers were presented at the conference, which covered diverse research topics from local indigenous accounting issues to global contemporary sustainability. Professor Jeong Bon Kim, chair professor of accountancy and head of the Department of Accountancy at the City University of Hong Kong, and Chris Tang, senior vice president and head of investment portfolio of Fubon Bank (HK), were invited to give keynote speeches.



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# Wanzai Port to accommodate up to 3,840 crossings per hour

JULIE ZHU

**T**HE Wanzai Port will officially reopen on January 23 with an hourly immigration capacity of 3,840 crossings, the local government announced yesterday during a press conference.

The arrival hall on Macau's side will consist of six e-crossing channels and two manual channels. Another three back-up manual channels will be available inside a visa office. In total, these channels are expected to register 1,710 crossings on an hourly basis.

At the departure hall, there will be seven e-channels and two manual channels, and another three back-up manual channels. These channels can cope with 2,130 crossings per hour.

Combining the departure and arrival halls, the immigration checkpoints can handle 3,840 crossings every hour.

The new port will be open for 15 hours per day from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., meaning that, on a daily basis, the port can absorb approximately 50,000 crossings, or a maximum of about 18.25 million crossings per year. In 2016, the Wanzai Port closed in order to undergo a general upgrading of its facilities. They year before, the port had recorded a total of 741,900 crossings.

To transport passengers between Macau and Zhuhai, the

mainland ferry company Yuet Tung will arrange one ferry every 15 minutes, amounting to four ferries every hour. Each ferry can take a maximum of 280 passengers. In total, the four ferries will have a capacity of 1,120 passengers, approximately 300 fewer than the maximum capacity of the immigration checkpoints. In total, there will be 110 ferries running during the opening hours.

The number of ferries is three-fold that of the ferries operating before the port was closed. Lao Wan Seong, Deputy Director of the Public Security Police Force (PSP) claimed that the police authority will work with other government departments to handle any unexpected situations.

Residents of Macau and Zhuhai will enjoy a discounted ferry fare. Traveling from Macau to Zhuhai, residents of these two cities will pay 20 patacas for a single trip or 30 patacas for a round trip. From Zhuhai to Macau, fares for a single and a round trip will be 15 and 25 yuan, respectively. To ensure the security at the premises of Wanzai Port, the PSP will dispatch two vessels to carry out 24-hour inspections at the water area. Also to cope with the possible growth of passengers in the area, the Transport Bureau (DSAT) will make changes to the bus areas and tourism bus areas.

To coordinate with the reopening of the immigration facility and to improve the pedestrian environment, the PSP, the water and marine authority, the customs authority, the municipal affairs authority, the DSAT and electricity provider CEM will carry out a road plan, resurface roads, and update traffic signs and lighting facilities in the surrounding area. The PSP will also enhance inspections to maintain public safety and traffic order around the port.

## HENGQIN BORDER GATE TO OPEN IN FIRST QUARTER

The local government has confirmed that the Hengqin border gate will reopen in the first quarter of 2020. During yesterday's press conference, the local government reported

on the updates to the Hengqin border gate.

Currently, the local government is carrying out legislation and testing works for the new border gate, which links Macau's Lotus Flower Bridge Checkpoint to mainland territory.

In total, the future Hengqin border gate will have 24 e-checkpoints, four channels combining e-checkpoints and manual checkpoints and six manual checkpoints staffed by immigration officials.

The immigration checkpoints will adopt the same methods as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, meaning that immigration checkpoints of both Zhuhai and Macau will be put together, but not merged.

The new mode of clearance is officially called the Joint Boundary Control System. There

will be a seamless connection between Macau's immigration checkpoints and Zhuhai's immigration checkpoints.

Currently, the public on the Macau side must first cross the border gate at the Cotai frontier and then take a bus to the Zhuhai side.

Once the new Hengqin border gate is open, users on the Macau side will need to first be transported to the Hengqin side to cross the border into Zhuhai.

During the first phase, the local government will allow specific public buses, double-plated cars, approved Macau single-plated cars, business cars, Hengqin border gate shuttle buses and likely some tourism buses to drive between the Macau port at the new border facility and Cotai. During yesterday's press conference, the local government did not reveal the length of the first phase.

By 2030, the Hengqin border gate is expected to handle 220,000 crossings on a daily basis.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS TO STUDY URBAN RENEWAL LEGAL MATTERS

**S**ECRETARY for Administration and Justice André Cheong Weng Chon has appointed three consultants from the land, public works and transport sectors to assist with urban renewal legal matters.

Yesterday, during the press conference regarding the new borders' arrangement, Cheong was asked about the appointment of his consultants.

In total, Cheong's office has 12 consultants, including Wong Chan Tong, former Director of the office for the Secretariat for Land, Public Works and Transport, and former department

heads at the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau (DSSOPT) Lao Iong and Chan Weng Hei.

Cheong explained that the appointment of these three new members is in consideration of upcoming urban renewal works.

In Cheong's opinion, these individuals are experienced in urban renewal matters, with Cheong's own job being more related to municipal matters. With the involvement of these experienced officials, Cheong hopes that communication will be enhanced between the municipal and public works bodies of the Macau SAR. **JZ**



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# Major HK developer donates land to mitigate housing crisis

SHAWNA KWAN

**W**HHEELOCK Properties Ltd. announced plans to donate several plots of land to charity for social housing in Hong Kong, following in the footsteps of fellow developers as anti-government protests continue to dog the city.

Hong Kong-based Wheelock will hand over 500,000 square feet (46,450 square meters) of land in the New Territories and Lantau Island to non-government organizations for a nominal sum of HKD1 (\$0.13) for each plot. The plots can be used to construct apartments for people waiting for public housing and around 6,000 families are expected to benefit. The area represents approximately 7% of the developer's total land bank, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Wheelock is the third top developer to pledge to help solve the housing shortage in Hong Kong - the world's least affordable home market - as pro-democracy demonstrations cripple the city's economy, deterring tourists and mainland shoppers alike. Chinese state media has lambasted Hong Kong's home builders for fueling young people's anger by pushing up property prices. The city's property tycoons



BLOOMBERG

have responded by offering land in the New Territories, where they have vast amounts of stock.

In September, New World Development Co. became the first to announce a donation of almost 20% of its land bank to charity. Henderson Land Development Co., which has previous experience in social housing, followed suit less than

two months later, saying it would give 428,000 square feet of land for the construction of so-called transitional housing.

Hong Kong's richest man Li Ka-shing has offered HKD1 billion, rather than land, for small- and medium-sized businesses.

The city's income inequality, as expressed in Gini coefficient, was the most for any de-

veloped economy in 2016 at a 45-year high. About one in five residents live below the poverty line; some people have resorted to living illegally in steel boxes or industrial estates because they can't afford a home.

Shares of parent company Wheelock & Co. were little changed Monday. The stock has risen 15.3% this year. **BLOOMBERG**

## HONG KONG

# Gov't to roll out latest measures to support SMEs

**T**HE government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will implement new measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) starting January 1, including a face-to-face service and enhancements to two funds designed to help the SMEs transform their businesses and explore new markets.

The government said on Sunday that a service team entitled "SME ReachOut" will be dispatched to the SMEs to help them identify funding

schemes and better utilize the support provided by the government.

As new capital has been injected into the two funds - the "Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales" and the "SME Export Marketing Fund, the funding ceilings for each enterprise will be doubled to 4 million Hong Kong dollars (about \$510,000) and HKD800,000 (about \$100,000) respectively and the ratio of initial payments will also be significantly improved to

75 percent.

The coverage of the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales will be expanded to all economies that have signed free trade agreements with Hong Kong.

"The measures to be launched will more effectively and flexibly support enterprises in expanding markets, while enhancing their competitiveness to help them capture new business opportunities," said Edward Yau, Hong Kong's secretary for Commerce



BLOOMBERG

and Economic Development, according to Xinhua.

The SAR government has announced several rounds of support measures since August this year to help SMEs weather out economic hardships caused by ongoing social unrest in the neighboring city.

Reports suggest that retailers, hoteliers and restaurateurs have been especially affected by the demonstrations. Hundreds of staff from these sectors have lost their jobs since the summer and a large number of others have been asked to take extended unpaid leave. **DB/XINHUA**

## GREATER BAY MUSICIANS TO PRESENT JOINT NEW YEAR CONCERT

Several hundred musicians from China's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area will jointly present a New Year concert, according to the event's host the China Media Group. The show will include nearly 300 musicians from the major symphony orchestras of Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau, and a choir made up of around 500 singers from 11 cities in the area, according to the group. They also include famous singers and actors from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The concert will be broadcast on January 1, 2020, on the TV and radio channels of the group and its new media platforms.

## GUANGDONG BEGINS BUILDING NEW TEST ZONE FOR SELF-DRIVING CARS

Guangdong Province has started building a testing center for both conventional vehicles and those featuring new energy, intelligent network and driverless technologies. With an investment of 2.15 billion yuan (around \$307 million), the 573-hectare facility in the city of Shaoguan, just north of the Greater Bay Area cities, aspires to become a world-class vehicle testing center upon completion. It will be constructed by Chinese automaker Guangzhou Automobile Group Co. Ltd. (GAC Group) and the government of Shaoguan. Guan Qiao, deputy head of the GAC R&D Center, said the testing site will have world-class performance parameters, road diversity and the capacity to ensure efficient tests for new energy, self-driving and other vehicles. "It is an inevitable trend for vehicles to go intelligent," Guan said. "For new technology, testing and verification are vital to ensure its reliability." China has conducted road tests on autonomous vehicles and other intelligent auto technologies in several cities including Beijing, Changsha and Guangzhou.

## SUPPORT SHIP FOR SATURATION DIVING ARRIVES IN GUANGZHOU

China delivered a new support ship for saturation diving in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou yesterday, according to its developer. Developed by the China State Shipbuilding Corporation Limited and a ship design company in Shanghai, the ship named Hailong is China's most advanced supporting ship for saturation diving. The ship is 124 meters long, 24 meters wide and has a cruising speed of 14.5 knots. It has a deck area of 900 square meters and can hold 120 people. The ship adopts the integrated design of the diving system and the main hull, carrying a world-class saturation diving system. The saturation diving system allows divers to dive hundreds of meters in deep-sea and work for a long time. It is widely used in the fields of marine resources development, emergency rescue and salvage as well as scientific research.

# ASIA'S DEBT LEVEL IS RISING AGAIN, BUT THAT'S A GOOD THING

**T**HE financial gearing of Asia Pacific's largest companies has risen for a second year following a period of deleveraging, but market participants don't see cause for alarm.

The median total debt-to-total equity for non-financial companies in the MSCI Asia Pacific Index reached about 44% in the first nine months of 2019. That is slightly higher than the 41% seen in 2007, before the global financial crisis. Still, for many analysts, a low interest-rate environment, healthy cash balances and a favorable global economic outlook provide reassurance.

"We have a benign outlook for interest rates, and the big thing in 2020 is that governments in Asia will start using their country balance sheets to start stimulating the economy," said Jim McCafferty, joint head of Nomura's Asia-Pacific equity research.

Falling interest rates globally have meant access to cheap financing for companies that want to expand through investments and acquisitions, or fund share buybacks. According to Justin Tang, head of Asian research at advisory firm United First Partners, Asian corporates have increased their borrowings in recent months in order to invest in new projects as trade tensions ease.

Firms domiciled in Macau, Thailand and the Philippines have the highest median debt-to-equity levels by country, while utilities dominated sectorally.

Analysts are confident that cash levels at companies in the region have improved over the past 12 years, providing enough



buffer for balance sheets. In the first three quarters of 2019, firms loaded up on \$2 trillion in cash and cash equivalents, three times the amount they had at the end of 2007.

Total debt, meanwhile, has more than doubled to about \$6 trillion in the same period. Some observers say that limiting the use of debt purely to rein in gearing ratios may prove to be counterproductive for companies with healthy balance sheets. It's not a good idea to forgo attractive

projects and lose them to competitors just "for the sake of controlling your net gearing ratio," said Felix Lam, who manages Asia Pacific equities at BNP Paribas Asset Management in Hong Kong.

In fact, gearing levels that are too low can be negative. Japan, which has undergone a long period of deleveraging since the bursting of its bubble economy in 1989, is a case in point. The country's return on equity has "stagnated at a historically low level since the 1990s," Oxford Economics

said in a November report, "because financial leverage has declined, while the corporate sector's saving surplus has persisted for two decades."

And while leverage has risen for Asian companies overall, it is still far behind that of their American counterparts, with members of the S&P 500 Index clocking a median debt-to-equity of 92%.

Current leverage levels may make some uneasy because higher debt is typically associated with vulnerability to economic downturn and increased risks for investors. But today, Asian companies are backed by economies with stronger balance sheets than during the global financial crisis, and recession fears have subsided in recent months because of positive data.

BNP Paribas's Lam said he prefers companies with lower gearing and pays "extra attention" when analyzing the capital expenditure and cash generation by those that are highly leveraged.

"Increase in gearing ratios does mean that the risk and volatility rise over time for certain stocks, but that doesn't mean that it's a straight no-go or negative in terms of a company's development in the next year," Lam said.

MDT/BLOOMBERG

## RISING DEBT LEVELS

Company	Total debt to total equity (%)
NIO Inc.-ADR	2,354
Wynn Macau Ltd.	1,421
Digi.com Berhad	796
Korean Air Lines Co.	662
Kyushu Electric Power Co.	504
Cosco Shipping Development Co.	463
AirAsia Group Berhad	437
Dairy Farm International Holdings Ltd.	431
Global Power Synergy Pcl	427
Huazhu Group Ltd.-ADR	401

## GAMING

# Gateway Casinos plans listing in \$1.1 billion deal with leisure

NATALIE OBIKO  
PEARSON

**G**ATEWAY Casinos & Entertainment Ltd., one of Canada's largest gaming companies, has agreed to a deal that will create a new firm valued at about \$1.1 billion including debt.

Gateway said Friday that Leisure Acquisition Corp., a special purpose company created to make acquisitions, will merge into a new unit of GTWY Holdings, Gateway's parent. GTWY shares are expected to

be listed on the New York Stock Exchange, according to a statement.

It's the latest in a string of mergers in the fast-growing gaming industry aided by special purpose acquisition companies, or spacs, that let private companies raise money without an initial public offering. Earlier this month, sports-betting firm DraftKings Inc. agreed to be bought by a publicly traded acquisition fund that valued the new firm at about \$3.3 billion.

Gateway, backed by private equity firm Catalyst Capital Group, has long sought to sell its shares. The Burnaby, British Columbia-based gaming company filed for a U.S. initial public offering in November 2018, expecting to raise about CAD400 million (\$306 million) and valuing the company at as much as CAD2.5 billion, a person familiar with the matter said at the time. Gateway withdrew its IPO registration on Friday.

Toronto-based Ca-

talyst was said to be weighing an IPO of Gateway in late 2015 before investor interest for new issuances in Canada dried up, people familiar with the matter said then. It also tried to take Gateway public in 2012 and also withdrew that IPO.

Gateway has 25 properties in British Columbia and Ontario, including the Starlight Casino near Vancouver that was named in a money laundering review last year for having permitted one gambler to convert CAD3.1 million, mostly

in 20s bundled in plastic bags, into chips in 2010. The provincial government implemented new rules in 2018 requiring casinos to more tightly identify sources of funds brought in by patrons.

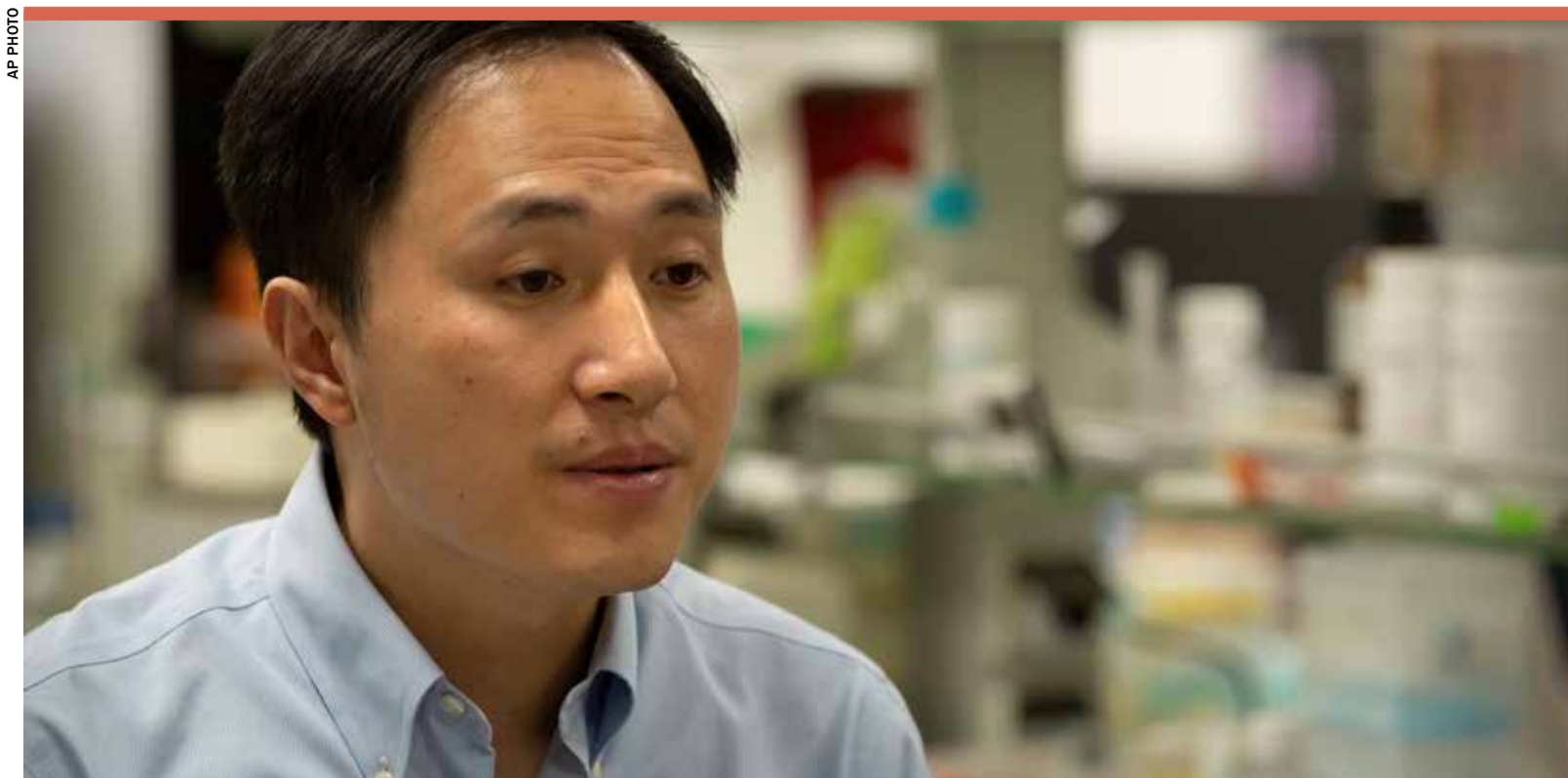
Gateway said the transaction with Leisure will be anchored by a \$30 million private placement by gaming investor HG Vora Capital Management LLC, which has agreed to purchase 3 million shares of GTWY for \$10 each, according to the statement.

Following the tran-

saction, Marc J. Falcone, a Leisure director and a former banker at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Deutsche Bank Securities Inc., will become president and chief executive officer, replacing Gateway CEO Tony Santo, who will retire, according to the statement.

The deal is expected to close in the second quarter, Gateway said. Gateway and Leisure will host an investor call to discuss the transaction on Jan. 7, according to the statement.

BLOOMBERG



In this Oct. 10, 2018, photo, Chinese scientist He Jiankui speaks during an interview at his laboratory in Shenzhen.

CHINA

# Court convicts 3 researchers involved in gene-edited babies

KEN MORITSUGU, BEIJING

A Chinese scientist who set off an ethical debate with claims that he had made the world's first genetically edited babies was sentenced yesterday to three years in prison because of his research, state media said.

He Jiankui, who was convicted of practicing medicine without a license, was also fined 3 million yuan (\$430,000) by a court in the southern city of Shenzhen, China's official Xinhua News Agency reported. Two other researchers involved in the project received

lesser sentences and fines.

The verdict said the three defendants had not obtained qualification as doctors, pursued fame and profits, deliberately violated Chinese regulations on scientific research and crossed an ethical line in both scientific research and medicine, according to Xinhua. It also said they had fabricated ethical review documents.

The court said the researchers were involved in the births of three gene-edited babies to two women, confirming reports of a third baby. It said all three pleaded guilty during the trial, which Xinhua reported was closed

to the public because of privacy concerns.

He, the lead researcher, shocked the scientific world when he announced in November 2018 that he had altered the embryos of twin girls who had been born the same month. He described his work in exclusive interviews with The Associated Press.

The announcement sparked a global debate over the ethics of gene editing. He said he had used a tool called CRISPR to try to disable a gene that allows the AIDS virus to enter a cell, in a bid to give the girls the ability to resist the infection. The identity of the girls

has not been released, and it isn't clear if the experiment succeeded.

The CRISPR tool has been tested elsewhere in adults to treat diseases, but many in the scientific community denounced He's work as medically unnecessary and unethical, because any genetic changes could be passed down to future generations. The U.S. forbids editing embryos except for lab research.

He, who is known as "JK," told the AP in 2018 that he felt a strong responsibility to make an example, and that society would decide whether to allow the practice to go forward. He disappeared

from public view shortly after he announced his research at a conference in Hong Kong 13 months ago, apparently detained by authorities, initially in an apartment in Shenzhen, a city in Guangdong province that borders Hong Kong.

It wasn't clear if the three-year prison term includes any of the time he has already spent in Chinese custody.

A Chinese scientist said the sentence should have been harsher to deter others. Kehkooi Kee, a Tsinghua University researcher who conducts gene-editing research on stem cells, also said that He should be held responsible for any fallout from the experiment on the lives of the babies and their families.

Dr. William Hurlbut, a Stanford University bioethicist whose advice He sought for more than a year before his experiment, said he felt sorry for the scientist, his wife and two young daughters.

"I warned him things could end this way, but it was just too late," Hurlbut wrote in an email to the AP and to the director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, and gene-editing pioneer Jennifer Doudna at the University of California, Berkeley.

"Sad story — everyone lost in this (JK, his family, his colleagues, and his country), but the one gain is that the world is awakened to the seriousness of our advancing genetic technologies," Hurlbut wrote.

He studied in the U.S. before setting up a lab at the Southern University of Science and Technology of China in Shenzhen. The verdict accused him of colluding with Zhang Renli and Qin Jinzhou, who worked at medical institutes in the same province.

Zhang was sentenced to two years in prison and fined 1 million yuan, Xinhua said. Qin received an 18-month prison sentence, but with a two-year reprieve, and a 500,000 yuan fine. AP

CHURCH CRACKDOWN

# Gov't sentences pastor to 9 years on subversion charge

CHINA yesterday sentenced a prominent pastor who operated outside the Communist Party-recognized Protestant organization to nine years in prison.

The People's Intermediate Court in the southwestern city of Chengdu said Wang Yi was also convicted of illegal business operations, fined and had his personal assets seized.

Wang had led the Early Rain Covenant Church and was arrested a year ago as part of an ongoing crackdown on all unauthori-

zed religious groups in the country. The government requires that Protestants worship only in churches recognized and regulated by the party-led Three-Self Patriotic Movement. A separate body oversees the Catholic church, and China and the Vatican have no formal relations.

Si Weijiang, a lawyer hired by Wang's mother, said the charge of illegal business operations stemmed from the printing of books about Christian culture.

"It is actually about the freedom of publication and

there has been no social harm," Si said in a phone interview.

The charge of incitement "involves preaching and is an issue of speech, which has also inflicted no social harm," he said.

Even within the narrow confines it has established, China's officially atheist ruling party has been seeking to rein in religious expression, including removing crosses from official and unofficial churches.

More widely, the party has demolished places of worship, barred Tibetan

children from Buddhist religious studies and incarcerated more than a million members of Islamic ethnic minorities in what are termed "re-education centers."

Early Rain is believed to have had several hundred members who met in different locations around Chengdu, the sprawling capital of Sichuan province. Many of those were taken from their homes overnight in lightning raids, including Wang's wife, Jiang Rong, who was later released on bail.

Wang had been critical of party head and state pre-

sident Xi Jinping and made a point of holding a prayer service on June 4 each year to commemorate the 1989 bloody assault on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Beijing's hard line on religion has underscored its contrast with other culturally Chinese societies, such as Hong Kong and Taiwan, where most follow Buddhism and traditional Chinese beliefs, but where Christianity and other religions also thrive.

At least two members of Early Rain fled to Taiwan,

the self-governing island democracy that China claims as its own territory.

Wang's sentencing was condemned by Amnesty International. China researcher Patrick Poon said it was a "mockery of China's supposed religious freedoms."

"Wang Yi was merely practicing his religion and peacefully standing up for human rights in China," Poon said in an emailed statement. "Wang Yi is a prisoner of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released." AP

# KIM CALLS FOR MEASURES TO PROTECT NORTH KOREA'S SECURITY

KIM TONG-HYUNG, SEOUL

**N**ORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for his military and diplomats to prepare unspecified "offensive measures" to protect the country's security and sovereignty, the North's state media said yesterday before his end-of-year deadline for the Trump administration to make major concessions to salvage a fragile nuclear diplomacy.

Kim during a ruling Workers' Party meeting Sunday also "comprehensively and anatomically analyzed" problems arising in efforts to rebuild the North's moribund economy and presented tasks for "urgently correcting the grave situation of the major industrial sectors," the Korean Central News Agency said.

The plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee, which began on Saturday, is being closely watched amid concerns that Kim could suspend his deadlocked nuclear negotiations with the United States and take a more confrontational approach by lifting a self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests.

The North has said the meeting, which will continue for at least another day, is intended for



discussions on overcoming "manifold and harsh trials and difficulties."

Kim, who has said the North would pursue a "new path" if Washington persists with sanctions and pressure, is expected to announce major policy changes during his New Year's address on Wednesday.

The KCNA report did not describe any decisions made at the meeting or mention any specific remarks by Kim about the United States.

The North's official Rodong

Sinmun newspaper published photos of Kim, wearing a white dress shirt and horn-rimmed glasses, speaking from a podium as hundreds of government and military officials jotted down his comments.

"Emphasizing the need to take positive and offensive measures for fully ensuring the sovereignty and security of the country as required by the present situation, [Kim] indicated the duties of the fields of foreign affairs, munitions industry and armed forces of the DPRK," the agency said in its En-

glish report, referring to North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

KCNA's Korean-language report said Kim called for "active and offensive" measures.

Kim also "comprehensively and anatomically analyzed the problems arising in the overall state building including the state management and economic construction in the present time," the agency said.

"He stressed the need to reasonably straighten the country's economic work system and order and establish a strong discipline and presented the tasks for urgently correcting the grave situation of the major industrial sectors of the national economy," the report said.

It added that Kim stressed the need for a "decisive" increase in agricultural production and gave out instructions for improving science, education and public health standards.

Lee Sang-min, a spokesman of South Korea's Unification Ministry, said Seoul is closely watching the North Korean party meeting, but he didn't speculate on what Kim's call for active and offensive security measures would have meant.

Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior

analyst at South Korea's private Sejong Institute, said it was the first time under Kim's rule that a plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee continued for more than a day.

Kim has an urgent need to make major policy changes in the face of persistent U.S.-led sanctions and pressure, especially with a global crackdown on North Korean labor exports further straining his broken economy, Cheong said.

It's also likely that Kim during the party meeting reaffirmed a commitment to strengthen his nuclear and missile program, considering the commander of the North Korean army's strategic force was seen during Saturday's meeting, Cheong said.

Kim has met President Donald Trump three times in two years of high-stakes summitry, but the diplomacy has progressed little beyond their vague aspirational goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. At their last meeting in June, they agreed to resume talks. A working-level meeting in Sweden in October broke down with the North Koreans blaming their American counterparts for maintaining an "old stance and attitude."

The North said earlier this month it conducted two "crucial" tests at its long-range rocket launch facility, raising speculation it has been developing a new long-range missile or preparing a satellite launch. **AP**

## THAILAND

# Official warns of water shortages due to weather, dams

GRANT PECK, BANGKOK

**T**HAILAND should brace for serious water shortages when the hot season begins in March after a year with unusually little rainfall, one of the country's top water management officials said yesterday.

Retention of water by dams in upstream areas of the Mekong River also is seen as contributing to record-low water levels in the river, affecting the region's ecology.

Somkiat Prajumwong, director-general of Thailand's Office of National Water Resources, said the river will experience record-low levels, after already recording new records this past year.

His agency is warning people along the Mekong to beware of river bank slides and prepare for serious water shortages in March

and April, when temperatures in Thailand usually peak.

Tests of China's new upstream Jinghong dam on Jan. 1-3 are expected to lead to a drop in the the Mekong's water level by as much as 1 meter along eight northern and northeastern Thai provinces, said the water resources agency.

Restrictions on water use from some Thai dams were imposed by late December, according to a report in the Bangkok Post newspaper. It quoted the head of Thailand's Royal Irrigation Department, Thongplew Kongjun, as saying that water from the Ubol Ratana and Chulabhorn dams was being reserved for consumption and ecological conservation, rather than for growing crops, because of their low levels.

The Mekong River Com-

mission already warned that severe to extreme drought was expected to hit Thailand and Cambodia at least until January. The regional agency, to which Laos and Vietnam also belong, blamed insufficient wet season rainfall, an abbreviated period of monsoon rains and unusually high temperatures and evaporation caused by El Nino, a cyclical climate phenomenon originating with warming water in the Pacific Ocean.

The commission said in a paper issued at its annual meeting in November that the long-term prognosis was bleak, as the Lower Mekong Basin for the past few decades "has been experiencing severe drought hazards with serious economic losses due to damages of agricultural crops, negative impacts on the environment, and effects on people's livelihoods."

"The duration and magnitude of the impacts have significantly increased over the past two decades if comparing the drought hazards from one event to another," it said.

It warned that, depending upon factors involving the climate, the lower Mekong basin "is likely to see more severe droughts in the next 30, 60 and 90 years due to less precipitation, high air temperature," as well as a high percentage of evaporation from ground and plants.

The issue involving dams was vividly illustrated about a month ago, when the Mekong River acquired an aquamarine color due to the water becoming clear and reflecting the sky, replacing its usual yellowish-brown shade that is due to the sediment it normally carries downstream.

Experts blamed the lar-

ge Xayaburi hydroelectric dam upstream in Laos that began operating in October for causing the color change.

The dam blocks much sediment from moving farther downstream, which accounts for the water becoming clear, Pravit Kanthaduang, a fishery official in Thailand's Bueng Kan province, said earlier this month. Less sediment means less nutrition for plants and fish in the river, threatening the ecological balance, he said.




"The current has less sediment, which unleashes energy onto the river banks downstream," said Chai-narong Setthachau of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science at Thailand's Mahasarakham University. "This so-called 'hungry water' will cause much more erosion to the banks, uprooting trees and damaging engineering structures in the river."

The dam's developers said they spent more than 19.4 billion baht (\$648 million) to mitigate negative impacts on the environment.

Environmental activists have expressed urgent concern about the upstream dams.

"Thai riverine communities living along the Mekong, downstream of dams in China and Xayaburi dam in Laos, have never experienced ecological changes at this scale," Pianporn Deetes of the conservation group International Rivers said. "Amidst drought, dams exacerbate the destruction of the Mekong's fragile ecosystem, especially for unseasonal water fluctuation that means impacts on aquatic lives, fisheries, food and income security, water supply, navigation and more." **AP**

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

# Inter-chambers Business Lunch


Gavin Morgan - Jones Lang LaSalle  
Real Estate within the GBA  
15 January 2020

**@ MGM Cotai - Wednesday 15 January 2020**


**Decoding the Real Estate Opportunities within the GBA**

1. Overview of broad policy trends and development directions	MGM Cotai
2. Where are investors placing their bets?	12:30: Registration and Drinks 13:00: Lunch 13:40: Presentation and Q&A 14:30: Close
3. What are the challenges real estate investors face?	
4. The role of infrastructure in creating opportunities	Members – MOP/HKD 450 Non-members – MOP/HKD 600
5. Opportunities in Hong Kong & Macao	Strict No-Show/Late Cancellation policy applies for this event Vegetarian meal to be requested in advance


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tel : + 853 2857 5059  
@: info@amcham.org.mo



tel : + 853 8798 9697  
@: info@britchammao.org



tel : + 853 8798 9699  
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# CYPRUS COURT: BRITISH TEEN GUILTY OF FABRICATING RAPE CLAIMS

MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS,  
PARALIMNI

A Cyprus court yesterday found a 19-year-old British woman guilty of fabricating claims that she was gang raped by 12 Israelis in a hotel room at a tourist resort in the east Mediterranean island nation, saying that her story lacked credibility.

Famagusta District Court Judge Michalis Papatthanasiou said the defendant didn't tell the truth and tried to deceive the court with "evasive" statements in her testimony.

The case had triggered widespread interest in Britain and Israel. It was reported as a shocking gang rape until Cypriot authorities cast down on the woman's account.

The woman, who has not been identified, was found guilty of the charge of "public mischief," which carries a maximum fine of 1,700 euros (\$1,900) and up to a year imprisonment. She will remain in Cyprus until her Jan. 7 sentencing.

Emerging from the court house after the verdict, both the woman and her mother wore strips of fabric over their mouths onto which stitched lips were drawn.

Papatthanasiou said that the defendant admitted to investigators under questioning that she had lied and apologized. He said she made up the claims because she was "ashamed" after finding out that some of the Israelis had videoed her having consensual sex with her Israeli boyfriend on their mobile phones.

The judge said the woman admitted that what had transpired



in the hotel room happened with her consent. He said that admission and her subsequent apology "was the only time the defendant told the truth."

The court heard that a physical examination of the woman after she filed the complaint to police found no evidence of rape. The judge rejected testimony from a pathologist testifying for the defense that rape couldn't be ruled out.

The woman told investigators that she had been raped by as many as a dozen Israelis aged 15-

20 on July 17. Cyprus police said she retracted the allegations 10 days later after investigators found what they said were inconsistencies in her statements.

All 12 Israelis returned home shortly after their release and their defense lawyers said they would sue the woman for damages.

Taking the stand earlier in the trial, the British woman said that while she was having sex with her boyfriend, she was pinned down and others who entered the room raped her.

She said that she felt threaten-

ed by investigators while she was being questioned and that she feared she would be arrested if she didn't sign the retraction, adding that she "even feared for her life."

Judge Papatthanasiou dismissed her testimony as being "exaggerated, confused, contradictory and incoherent."

Defense lawyer Ritsa Pekri asked the court to mitigate her sentence, saying that she regretted her actions and only did what she did out of "immaturity," and because she was under strong psychological pressure.

Pekri said the woman is on anti-depressants.

Outside of the court, Nicoletta Charalambidou, another lawyer on the British woman's legal team, said the conviction was expected and that an appeal would be filed to Cyprus' Supreme Court because defense lawyers feel that their client's rights to a fair trial had been "violated to a significant degree."

Charalambidou said witness testimony for the defense created "reasonable doubt" that her client was guilty of the public mischief charge, adding that the judge didn't "properly assess" that testimony.

She said Pekri's remark that the British woman regretted her actions "doesn't mean that she admits guilt."

Michael Polak with the group Justice Abroad, which also helped defend the British woman, said the appeal will be based on the premise that there was evidence indicating that the woman had been raped, but that the judge refused to consider it.

The lawyer for some of the 12 Israelis accused by a 19-year-old British woman of gang raping her welcomed the ruling.

Lawyer Nir Yaslovitzh called for a "harsh sentence" in order to deter "all those accusers who find it OK to make up false" accusations.

About 30 people from the group Network Against Violence Against Women staged a brief protest outside the court house after the verdict was announced, chanting slogans in support of the British woman. Some wore strips of cloth with stitched lips drawn on them over their mouths.

"We disagree with the judgment, that's why we're here in support of the young British lady," said protester Argentoulla Ioannou. AP

# Greta Thunberg's parents went green to 'save' their daughter

NATASHA LIVINGSTONE,  
LONDON

THE parents of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg made changes in their lives to "save" their daughter, not the world.

The teenager's father, Svante Thunberg, told the BBC yesterday that his 16-year-old daughter experienced depression for three or four years before going on school environmental strikes.

He described how the young climate activist "fell ill" and stopped eating and talking to others.

To help her recover, he and his wife - Swedish opera singer Malena Ernman - made significant chan-

ges in their lives to become more environmentally friendly.

Svante Thunberg went vegan and Ernman stopped flying, which "changed her whole career," he said.

"To be honest, she didn't do it to save the climate. She did it to save her child because she saw how much it meant to her, and then, when she did that, she saw how much she grew from that, how much energy she got from it," Thunberg said.

The father added that initially he did not support his daughter's activism.

"We thought it was a bad idea, just the idea of your own daughter sort of putting herself at the very front line of such a huge ques-

tion like climate change," he said. "You wouldn't want that as a parent."

His comments came during a special edition of the BBC Radio 4 Today program guest-edited by the young climate campaigner.

The BBC was heavily criticized for flying their presenter to Sweden to interview the teenager and her father, saying they "did not have time for other means of transport."

The program also included interviews with outgoing Bank of England chief Mark Carney, who said the financial sector is responding too slowly to the climate crisis, and environment filmmaker David Attenborough. AP



# Iran-backed Iraqi militia vows revenge to US airstrikes

QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA,  
BAGHDAD

**A**N Iranian-backed militia said yesterday that the death toll from U.S. military strikes in Iraq and Syria against its fighters has risen to 25, vowing to exact revenge for the "aggression of evil American ravens."

The U.S. attack — the largest yet targeting an Iraqi state-sanctioned militia — and the calls for retaliation, represent a new escalation in the proxy war between the U.S. and Iran playing out in the Middle East that could threaten U.S. interests in the region.

The calls for revenge in Baghdad came a day after U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Washington had carried out military strikes targeting the Iranian-backed Iraqi militia it had blamed for a rocket attack that killed an American contractor in Iraq last week.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the strikes send the mes-



AP PHOTO

sage that the U.S. will not tolerate actions by Iran that jeopardize American lives.

The U.S. military said "precision defensive strikes" were conducted against five sites of Kataeb Hezbollah, or Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq and Syria. The group, which is separate force from the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, operates under the umbrella of the state-sanctioned militias known collectively as the Popu-

lar Mobilization Forces. Many of them are supported by Iran.

"Our battle with America and its mercenaries is now open to all possibilities," Kataeb Hezbollah said in a statement around midnight Sunday. "We have no alternative today other than confrontation and there is nothing that will prevent us from responding to this crime."

The U.S. blames the militia for a rocket barrage Friday that killed

a U.S. defense contractor at a military compound near Kirkuk, in northern Iraq, as well as for a series of other attacks on bases that have not been claimed by any faction. Officials said as many as 30 rockets were fired in the Kirkuk attack.

A spokesman for Kataeb Hezbollah denied that the group was behind the rocket attacks on U.S. bases, including the one that killed the American contractor, saying Washington is using them as a pretext to attack his group.

The spokesman, Mohammed Mohieh, told The Associated Press the death toll from the American airstrikes rose to 25 yesterday and that at least 51 militiamen were wounded, some of whom were in serious condition. The militia would retaliate, he said but added that the group's commanders would decide on the form of retaliation.

"These forces must leave," he said of U.S. troops in Iraq, calling the latest attack a "crime" and a

"massacre."

The U.S. has maintained some 5,000 troops in Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi government, to help assist in the fight against the Islamic State group.

An official with the Popular Mobilization Forces said one of the American missiles struck a room where the fighters were taking a nap in the afternoon, killing some of them in their sleep as the ceiling collapsed. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters, said U.S. forces have targeted Kataeb Hezbollah in the past but offered no evidence to support his claims.

In Tehran, foreign ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi condemned the U.S. strikes against Kataeb Hezbollah as an "obvious case of terrorism" and accused Washington of ignoring Iraq's sovereignty.

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah also blasted the "brutal American aggression," saying those who took the decision to carry out the attack "will soon discover how stupid this criminal decision was."

Kataeb Hezbollah is led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, one of Iraq's most powerful men. He once battled U.S. troops and is now the deputy head of the Popular Mobilization Forces. AP

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## what's ON



### MACAU-ZHUHAI FIREWORKS IN CELEBRATION OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETURN OF MACAU TO THE MOTHERLAND AND NEW YEAR'S EVE FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

**TIME:** 12am (December 31)

**VENUE:** Next to Macau Tower

**ADMISSION:** Free

**ORGANIZER:** Macau Government Tourism Office

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2833 3000

Starry Vienna – New Year Concert

**TIME:** 8pm

**VENUE:** Grand Auditorium, Macau Cultural Centre

**ADMISSION:** MOP150, MOP250, MOP350,

MOP450

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2853 0782

**KONG SENG TICKETING SERVICE:** 2855 5555

### THE GARDEN OF SPIRITED MINDS

**TIME:** 3pm & 5pm (December 31, January 1 & 2)

3pm, 4pm & 5pm (January 3, 4 & 5)

**VENUE:** Small Auditorium, Macao Cultural Centre

**ADMISSION:** MOP180

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 2840 0555

Angel Fung's Gallery

**TIME:** 10am-6pm (Tuesdays to Fridays)

2:30pm-5:30pm (Saturdays & Sundays)

**UNTIL:** January 19, 2020

**VENUE:** G32 Gallery, G/F

**ADMISSION:** Free

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 6663 0008

### THE LONG JOURNEY: THE FORBIDDEN CITY AND MARITIME SILK ROAD

**TIME:** 10am-9pm (Last entry at 6:30pm; closed on

Mondays and public holidays)

**UNTIL:** 13 April 2020

**VENUE:** Macau Museum of Art

**ADMISSION:** Free

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 87919814

### RED DECEMBER – EXHIBITION OF CARLOS MARREIROS

**TIME:** 10am-9pm

**UNTIL:** 13 February 2020

**VENUE:** Tap Seac Gallery, located at No. 95,

Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida

**ADMISSION:** Free

**ENQUIRIES:** (853) 8988 4000

### EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY TAM CHECK WUN AND LAO CHON HONG, ARTISTS WINNING THE GRAND PRIZE OF THE JURY AWARD OF THE COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION OF MACAU ARTISTS 2017

**TIME:** 10am to 7pm (Closed on Mondays)

**UNTIL:** March 1, 2020

**VENUE:** Exhibitions Gallery and the Nostalgic

House of the Taipa Houses

**ADMISSION:** Free

## Offbeat

### FOOTBALL-MAKING TOWN SETS RECORD FOR MOST THROWN AT ONCE

An Ohio town long associated with the manufacturing of footballs has set a Guinness World Record for the most thrown at the same time.

The organization certified the record after the attempt was made Oct. 25 by 950 people simultaneously throwing a football on the Ada War Memorial Stadium football field, the Lima News reported this week.

Students from kindergarten through 12th grade joined teachers, coaches, bus drivers, school staff and community members to set the record.

The Wilson Football Factory in Ada donated more than 1,000 commemorative footballs for the attempt. Workers at the factory make about 3,000 footballs a day, cutting, stitching and lacing each by hand in a 25-step process.

The company supplies the football used by the NFL.

## TV canal macau



13:00	TDM News (Repetição)
13:30	Telejornal RTPi (Diferido)
15:00	Água de Mar
15:30	BING
15:45	Os Ursos Boonie na Neve
16:00	História a História com Fernando Rosas
16:30	Quem Quer Ser Milionário
17:45	Império (Repetição)
18:35	Semana Internacional (Repetição)
19:10	Resumo Liga dos Campeões 2019/2020
19:30	Ouro Verde Sr.1
20:30	Telejornal
21:10	Macau 20 Anos
21:25	TDM Talk Show
21:55	Livros com João Guedes
22:05	Viagens Gastronómicas
22:30	Império
23:15	TDM News
23:50	Justiça de Chicago - Fim
00:35	Telejornal (Repetição)
01:20	No Ar

## cinema



### CINETEATRO

27 - 31 Dec



#### STAR WARS:THE RISE OF SKYWALKER

ROOM 1

2:15, 7:00, 9:45pm

Room 2

4:30

**Director:** J. J. Abrams

**Starring:** Carrie Fisher, Mark Hamill, Adam Driver, Daisy Ridley

**Language:** English

**Duration:** 141min

#### MY TYRANO: TOGETHER FOREVER

ROOM 1

5:00

**Director:** Kobun Shizumo

**Starring:** Kaori Ishihara, Shin'ichirō Miki, Aoi Yūki

**Language:** Cantonese

**Duration:** 108min

#### A SHAUN OF THE SHEEP

ROOM 2

2:30, 7:30pm

**Director:** Richard Phelan, Will Becher

**Language:** Chinese

**Duration:** 108min

#### BOMBSHELL

ROOM 2

9:30 pm

**Director:** Jay Roach

**Starring:** Charlize Theron, Nicole Kidman, Margot Robbie

**Language:** English

**Duration:** 108min

#### CATS

ROOM 3

2:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:30pm

**Director:** Tom Hooper

**Starring:** James Corden, Jason Derulo, Taylor Swift

**Language:** English

**Duration:** 123min

## this day in history



### 1999 UK PREPARES TO CELEBRATE MILLENNIUM

Britain is gearing up to join a global party in a spectacular array of revelries to welcome in the third millennium.

The scale of the celebrations ranges from large organised events, to street parties to an evening at home watching television footage from around the world.

Despite predictions of rain, millions are expected to pack the banks of the Thames in London Thames for funfairs, music, and street entertainment from 1100GMT until 0200GMT New Year's Day.

Celebrations around the world will kick-off at 1000 GMT as the Chatham Islands, Tonga, Fiji and Kiribati experience the new millennium first.

The people of Samoa will have to wait 25 hours more as the millennium arrives there last.

In between, festivities will be staged around the world.

With Britain's capital the home of time, eyes turn to the Queen's official opening of the £758m Millennium Dome, in Greenwich, south London.

She will arrive by boat along the River Thames to join 10,000 invited guests including 6,000 members of the public - who have not all received their tickets yet.

Celebrities and politicians including Prime Minister Tony Blair will attend.

In a blow to the celebrations, the Millennium Wheel will be officially unveiled but will not take passengers due to a capsule failing a safety check.

At midnight, a 60m high "River of Fire", created by pyrotechnic candles, will light up along the Thames in 10.8 seconds - as fast as the earth rotated into a new age.

In Scotland, the Royal National Scottish Orchestra, pop group Texas, and old favourites the Bay City Rollers will perform in Edinburgh and a beacon lit at Ben Nevis.

A giant beacon will be lit in Cardiff as part of Welsh celebrations, and one in Northern Ireland.

In Liverpool, the nightclub Cream is hosting a dance party with Fat Boy Slim and Pete Tong while in Birmingham people are expected to gather in Centenary and Victoria Squares.

Celebrations in Manchester include a huge fireworks display at Castlefield.

Courtesy BBC News

## IN CONTEXT

While many enjoyed the festivities thousands in London did not.

Revellers struggled to get home for hours as key tube stations were shut for safety reasons and central parts of the capital were cordoned off.

The Millennium Wheel - the British Airways London Eye - did not open until a month later but its subsequent success could make it a permanent feature of the capital's skyline.

Thousands suffered delays of several hours in being admitted to the Dome on Millennium Eve because of an administrative error.

It failed to attract sufficient visitors and suffered huge losses before it closed a year later.

After difficulties selling the site, the government gave it to developers for free in return for a share of any profits.



MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

**YOUR STARS**

**ARIES**  
 Mar. 21-Apr. 19  
 It's a good day to hash out disagreements at work or nearly anywhere else. Your ability to make your case is heightened, and you should find that your adversaries come around to your side soon.

**TAURUS**  
 Apr. 20-May. 20  
 Take a second or third look at your situation — is it really as bad as you had feared? It may not be perfect, but you can still take something positive out of it if you have a mind to.

**GEMINI**  
 May. 21-Jun. 21  
 Don't get too excited about how much you've got to do — your energy is better spent on dreaming up new ideas and making plans. It's a good day for living in the present and letting others worry about the

**CANCER**  
 Jun. 22-Jul. 22  
 Try not to miss the point of whatever news comes your way — though it may be hard to discern which bits are most important. Think things through and make sure it's all coming to you.

**LEO**  
 Jul. 23-Aug. 22  
 It's time for you to make a new friend! That doesn't mean you have to force anything, but you should at least open up to new coworkers or chat with folks in new social situations. It's easy!

**VIRGO**  
 Aug. 23-Sep. 22  
 Work — or the lack of it — may cause problems today, but there's good news: You're on the way back into balance! Just keep pushing yourself and bit by bit, you will find that you're where you want to be.

**LIBRA**  
 Sep. 23-Oct. 22  
 Your fierce, brainy energy is making life easier for you today — but not in a boring way! Your great ideas and big plans help you to see the best way to cut through the bureaucracy and get your way.

**SCORPIO**  
 Oct. 23-Nov. 21  
 The little details really matter — so make sure you're paying close attention! If you have to sign anything, read it twice and get someone else you trust to do the same. Even if you don't see anything, it's worth it.

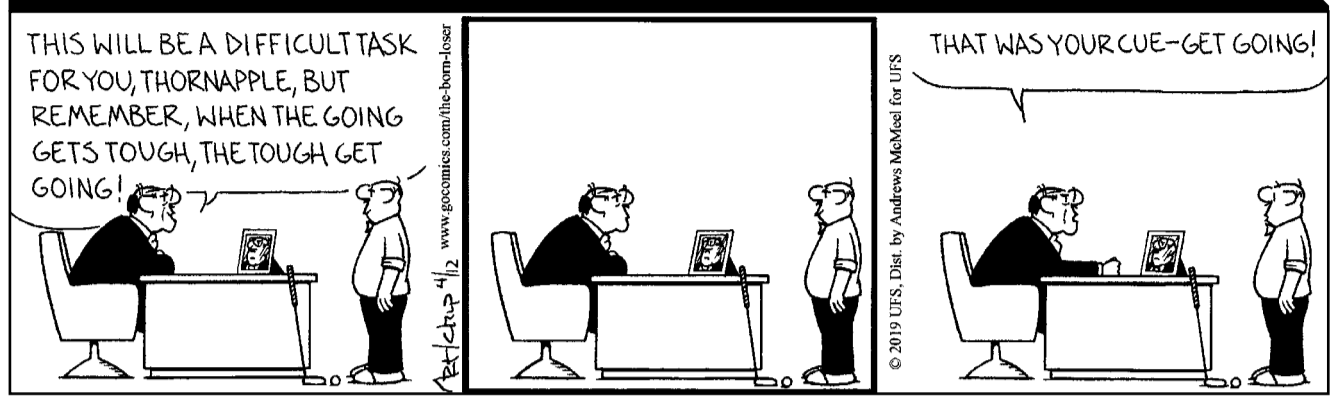
**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Nov. 22-Dec. 21  
 People are not to be trusted today — though that's not to say they are actively trying to stab you in the back! It's just that a wave of selfishness has passed over the world, but it passes quickly.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Dec. 22-Jan. 19  
 You may be a little more social than usual today, but there's no need for you to go nuts. If anything, you may find that your energy is better spent on parties than on work projects or other stuff.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Jan. 20-Feb. 18  
 Your unique take on today's events makes you perfect for finding solutions — or opportunities! It's a great day to advance your agenda, whatever it may be, and to show others where to go.

**PISCES**  
 Feb. 19-Mar. 20  
 You have two conflicting goals today, but you don't have to worry too much about choosing just yet. If anything, you may be able to find a way to have your cake and eat it, too!

**The Born Loser by Chip Sansom**



**SUDOKU**

EASY					EASY+							
7	3	8		2			7	6	8	2		
			6	4	1		1	4		9		
1			5		3	9	5			1		
5	4			8		4		8	2			
	2				9		9	3	8			
		5			1	3		2	9	7		
7			4		6	6				1	7	
		5	6	9			9	8	3			
	6			3	5	2	2	7	4	5		

MEDIUM					HARD							
2	5	4			6			1	4			
1	8	7			3		8					
				3	2	8						
8				1	5		2	6		4		
6	9		8		1	3				8	3	
		7	9			2			5			
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				2	8	9	1	8			7	
				6	5	3						

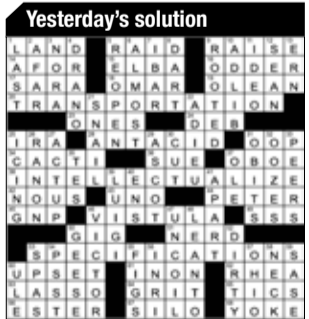
**WEATHER**

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
<b>CHINA</b>			
Beijing	-4	2	clear
Harbin	-24	-13	clear
Tianjin	-2	4	cloudy
Urumqi	-13	0	clear
Xi'an	-1	12	clear
Lhasa	-5	10	clear
Chengdu	6	13	cloudy
Chongqing	9	13	cloudy
Kunming	2	8	drizzle
Nanjing	1	13	cloudy
Shanghai	6	13	cloudy
Wuhan	2	14	cloudy
Hangzhou	5	14	overcast
Taipei	16	17	moderate rain
Guangzhou	12	17	overcast
Hong Kong	12	17	cloudy
<b>WORLD</b>			
Moscow	0	4	drizzle
Frankfurt	-3	3	clear
Paris	-2	4	clear
London	2	8	overcast
New York	-1	4	cloudy

**CROSSWORDS**

**ACROSS:** 1- Send payment; 6- Seaweed; 10- Start of North Carolina's motto; 14- Martini garnish; 15- I cannot tell \_\_\_; 16- Roasting rod; 17- Coherent light beam; 18- Liquid measure; 19- \_\_\_ colada; 20- Tolkien creature; 21- Settle a loan; 23- Set up; 24- Harper sitcom; 26- Ouzo flavoring; 27- Conjecture; 29- Broad scarf; 31- Authentic; 32- Dandruff; 33- Calendar abbr.; 36- Think about; 40- Ltr. addenda; 41- \_\_\_ bleu; 42- Runner Zatopek; 43- Island near Sicily; 44- Value; 46- Actress Scacchi; 48- Fastener; 49- Rapture; 50- It's a wrap; 52- Cyclotron bit; 55- Impulsive; 56- Long luxuriant hair; 57- Because of; 59- Zip-\_\_\_-Doo-Dah; 60- ¿cómo \_\_\_ usted?; 61- Spanish hero; 62- Untidy condition; 63- Pardon me; 64- Actress Witherspoon;

**DOWN:** 1- Part to play; 2- Brio; 3- Abuses; 4- "\_\_\_ had it!"; 5- Intense fear; 6- Key letter; 7- Director Kazan; 8- Ruled; 9- Teacher's favorite; 10- Lively wit; 11- Secret agents; 12- Subsequently; 13- Coup d'\_\_\_; 22- Dreyer's partner in ice cream; 23- Name on a bomber; 25- Gap; 26- Rights org.; 27- Journey; 28- Coop group; 29- Ghana's capital; 30- Fill completely; 32- Religious offshoot; 33- Chronometer; 34- Israeli guns; 35- Long fish; 37- Atty.-to-be exams; 38- Singer's syllables; 39- Take away; 43- Interlocks; 44- Chicken -- king; 45- Tool with a belt; 46- Forest clearing; 47- Ascends; 48- Fatty part of milk; 49- "Dracula" author Stoker; 50- Merit badge holder; 51- Pay to play; 53- Elevator man; 54- Protuberance; 56- Cry \_\_\_ River; 58- Suffix with glob;



**USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

<b>Emergency calls</b> 999	<b>Taxi</b> 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
<b>Fire department</b> 28 572 222	<b>Water Supply - Report</b> 2822 0088
<b>PJ (Open line)</b> 993	<b>Telephone - Report</b> 1000
<b>PJ (Picket)</b> 28 557 775	<b>Electricity - Report</b> 28 339 922
<b>PSP</b> 28 573 333	<b>Macau Daily Times</b> 28 716 081
<b>Customs</b> 28 559 944	
<b>S. J. Hospital</b> 28 313 731	
<b>Kiang Wu Hospital</b> 28 371 333	
<b>Commission Against Corruption (CCAC)</b> 28326 300	
<b>IAM</b> 28 387 333	
<b>Tourism</b> 28 333 000	
<b>Airport</b> 59 888 88	



<p><b>FOR SALE</b></p> <p><b>One Central- Nam Van Lake View</b>                  HK\$13,950,000 1,269 ft<sup>2</sup> 2 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p><b>FOR RENT</b></p> <p><b>Manhattan, Taipa</b>                  \$26,800/mth 2,305 ft<sup>2</sup> 4 1/2 2 1/2</p>	<p><b>FOR SALE</b></p> <p>[Taipa] Taipa village 2 1/2 1 1/2                  787 ft<sup>2</sup> \$4,950,000 (ref: 19096008)</p> <p>[Taipa] 2 connected apartment 4 1/2 2 1/2                  1,404 ft<sup>2</sup> \$8,680,000 (ref: 19096006)</p> <p>[Macau] One Central 2 1/2 2 1/2                  1,349 ft<sup>2</sup> \$14,839,000 (ref: 19096004)</p> <p>[Coloane] Large apartment 2 1/2 3 1/2 2 1/2                  2,530 ft<sup>2</sup> \$13,800,000 (ref: 19096000)</p>	<p><b>FOR RENT</b></p> <p>[Taipa] Studio (new building) 1 1/2                  470 ft<sup>2</sup> \$9,500/mth (ref: 19101002)</p> <p>[Taipa] Nova Grand 2 1/2 1 1/2                  935 ft<sup>2</sup> \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091005)</p> <p>[Macau] La Marina studio 1 1/2                  \$11,200/mth (ref: 19091001)</p> <p>[Taipa] Ocean Garden 4 1/2 4 1/2                  3,700 ft<sup>2</sup> \$35,000/mth (ref: 18040674)</p>
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## MEXICO CITY ZOO WELCOMES SECOND BABY GIRAFFE OF THE YEAR

**T**HE Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City is celebrating its second baby giraffe of the year, already as tall as a full-grown human.

The female giraffe was unveiled last week after a mandatory quarantine period following her Oct. 23 birth. She will be named via a public vote to generate empathy with the little cow, zoo director Juan Carlos Sánchez Olmos said Sunday.

The 96-year-old zoo on the grounds of the capital's central park has a knack for breeding creatures in captivity: This year it welcomed 170 baby animals, including six Mexican gray wolves, which are in danger of extinction.

"A new birth of a character as unique, as charismatic as a giraffe becomes emblematic—a flag for conservation, for the prestige of the zoo," said Sánchez Olmos while four grown giraffes happily munched branches and leaves behind him.

Giraffes are considered



"vulnerable" because the species faces significant habitat loss in the 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where they reside.

Unlike the wolves, which will be released into the Sierra de San Pedro Mártir National Park in Baja California, the giraffes are expected to spend their lives under observation in a dusty patch of the Chapultepec Zoo.

A team of professionals—including nutritionists, veterinarians and biologists like Sánchez Olmos—takes care of more than 1,000 animals in the zoo,

which sits under the flight path of jetliners that roar overhead.

As Sánchez Olmos detailed the zoo's mission to not just educate and amuse, but also conserve species, caretaker Alejandro González offered long branches from a pomegranate tree to four hungry giraffes. The tallest of the pack eagerly yanked the branches from González's hands.

"What did I tell you?" the caretaker said, looking the tall giraffe square in the eyes. "Take it easy, please."

If González had his way, the new addition to the

herd of giraffes would be called Sarita. At least, that's what he calls her.

The long-necked creatures are a favorite fixture at the zoo. The public voted in April to name the first baby giraffe of the year Jirafita, which translates as Uppity Little Giraffe - a play on the president's favorite word for dismissing critics.

"Fifi" is slang for uppity or posh. Populist President Andrés Manuel López Obrador frequently uses the word to describe opposition politicians and others who question his decisions.

## UK PUBLISHES CELEBRITY HOME ADDRESSES BY MISTAKE



**BRITISH** officials have apologized after mistakenly publishing the home addresses of more than 1,000 people who received special honors including singers Elton John and Olivia Newton-John.

The list also included Oscar-winning film directors, senior politicians and diplomats, popular athletes and people in sensitive defense roles.

The addresses were published online for about an hour late Friday when the Cabinet Office posted the recipients of New Year's Honors, including knighthoods.

"The information was removed as soon as possible," the Cabinet Office said in a statement. "We

apologize to all those affected and are looking into how this happened." Officials said the individuals will be contacted about the error.

The Information Commissioner's Office said it was investigating "in response to reports of a data breach involving the Cabinet Office and the New Year's Honors list." It can impose fines for privacy violations.

Britain's Cabinet Office publishes a list of the people receiving honors for merit, service or bravery twice a year: shortly before New Year's Eve and on the Saturday in June when Queen Elizabeth II's birthday is officially observed.

AD



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## AP MALE ATHLETE OF THE DECADE

# The King reigns: LeBron James

TIM REYNOLDS

**H**E left Cleveland for Miami, finally became a champion, went back to his beloved northeast Ohio, delivered on another title promise, then left for the Los Angeles Lakers and the next challenge. He played in eight straight finals. No NBA player won more games or more MVP awards over the last 10 years than he did. He started a school. He married his high school sweetheart.

"That's all?" LeBron James asked, feigning disbelief.

No, that's not all. Those were just some highlights of the last 10 years. There were many more, as the man called "King" spent the last decade reigning over all others — with no signs of slowing down.

James is The Associated Press male athlete of the decade, adding his name to a list that includes Tiger Woods, Wayne Gretzky and Arnold Palmer. He was a runaway winner in a vote of AP member sports editors and AP beat writers, easily outpacing runner-up Tom Brady of the New England Patriots.

"You add another 10 years of learning and adversity, pitfalls, good, great, bad, and any smart person who wants to grow will learn from all those experiences," James, who turns 35 Monday, told the AP. "A decade ago, I just turned 25. I'm about to be 35 and I'm just in a better (place) in my life and have a better understanding of what I want to get out of life."

Usain Bolt of Jamaica was third for dominating the sprints at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, soccer superstar Lionel Messi was fourth and Michael Phelps — the U.S. swimmer who retired as history's most decorated Olympian with 28 medals, 23 gold — was fifth.

James was revealed as the winner Sunday, one day after Serena Williams was announced as the AP's female athlete of the decade. In his 17th season, he's on pace to lead the league in assists for the first time while remaining among the NBA's scoring leaders.

"When LeBron James is involved," Denver coach Michael Malone said, "I'm never surprised."

Including playoffs, no one in the NBA scored more points than James in the last 10 years. He started the decade 124th on the league's all-time scoring list. He's now about to pass Kobe Bryant for No. 3. No. 2 Karl Malone and No. 1 Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are within reach.

Is Abdul-Jabbar in his sights? Is catching him the new decade's goal?

"I would be lying if I said I don't see it," James said. "Obviously I'm not trying to say, 'OK, well if I play this amount of time, if I average this' ... I'm not doing that because I've never done that with my career. I've always just kind of let it happen. Whatever happens, happens. But I see it. I do see it."

His work ethic, even now, makes even those closest to him marvel.

Here's a typical day this past summer for James, who remains obsessed with working even though fame and fortune found him long ago: He'd wake up at 3 a.m. and be at the Warner Bros. lot by 3:45 — where a weight room and court, built just for him, were waiting. He'd be lifting by 4 a.m., getting shots up by 5:30 and be ready to start another day of shooting the remake of "Space Jam" that he has been planning for years by 7 a.m.

"That's who he is," said Mike Mancias, one of the longest-tenured and most trusted members of James' inner circle, tasked for more than 15 years with keeping James fit. "He does whatever it takes when it comes to fulfilling his commitments to everything — especially his game and his craft."

The 2010s for James started with "The Decision," the widely criticized televised announcement of his choice to leave Cleveland for Miami. (Lost in the hubbub: The show raised more than \$2.5 million for charity.) He was with the Heat for four years, went to the NBA Finals all four times with Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh, finally won the title in 2012 — "it's about damn time," he said at the trophy celebration — and led the way in a Game 7 win over San Antonio to go back-to-back the following year.

"He grew immensely here as a leader," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "He impacted winning as much as with his leadership as he did with his talent. I think that was the most important thing he learned with us. And he's been able to take that to different franchises and continue using that as a template."

Cleveland was devastated when he left. It forgave him. James returned home in 2014, took Cleveland to four consecutive finals, then led the Cavaliers to the 2016 title and came up with one of the biggest plays of his life by pulling off a chase-down block of Golden



State's Andre Iguodala in the final seconds of Game 7 of that series.

And in 2018, he was off to LA.

Going Hollywood made so much sense — he's making movies, has a production company, has a program called "The Shop" as part of his 'Uninterrupted' platform featuring an array of guests from Drake to California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who signed a bill on the show that will allow college athletes to get paid for the use of their likeness and sign endorsement deals.

"There's a lot of moments from this decade that would be up there, winning the two Miami championships, winning a championship in Cleveland, the chase-down block," James said. "But the best moment? Definitely marrying Savannah. That would be No. 1."

James and longtime partner

Savannah Brinson got married six years ago. They already had two sons — both are very good basketball players already — and added a daughter in 2014.

James also spent most of the last decade as a lightning rod for critics.

He used his voice often on social matters, speaking out after the killing of unarmed Florida teenager Trayvon Martin and campaigning for Hillary Clinton. He supported Colin Kaepernick's methods of protesting police brutality and racial injustice. Most recently, he was criticized by many — including top U.S. lawmakers — for his remarks after Houston general manager Daryl Morey sparked a massive rift between the NBA and China by sending out a tweet supporting pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong.

"I don't live in regret," James

said. "There's no moment in this last decade that I wish I could have back. If a situation was bad or you feel like you could have done better, then I learned from it."

He doesn't know how much longer he'll play. He laments missing time with his children. His "I Promise" school that opened in 2018 in his hometown of Akron, Ohio, has been an immediate success story, and he wants to see that enterprise continue growing.

Some love him. Some don't. He doesn't mind.

"When you believe in your calling or you believe in yourself, then it doesn't matter what other people say or how other people feel," James said. "And if you allow that to stop you or deter you from your mission, then you don't get anywhere."

And in the 2010s, nothing dented James. AP

**OPINION**

**World Views**

Lionel Laurent, Bloomberg

**THIS MAN HOLDS EUROPE TOGETHER AS BREXIT TEARS IT APART**

Michel Barnier, the European Union's top Brexit negotiator, is the Brussels equivalent of a rock star. For three years, the unflappable 68-year-old Frenchman has been hashing out the terms of the U.K.'s departure while making sure the remaining 27 members stick together. He is the real survivor of the Brexit saga.

The fact that Barnier is still in the job is telling: Despite expectations that the Brits would make mincemeat of the perennially squabbling Europeans, it was the EU that stayed united while the U.K. cycled through two prime ministers, three Brexit secretaries and several botched attempts to get a better deal outside the bloc.

The hard part is still to come. With the EU set to show the Brits the door — having secured the key goals of settling the U.K.'s financial obligations, avoiding a return to a hard Irish border and protecting citizens' rights — Barnier and his team now have to negotiate a new deal to cement future trade ties with their troublesome, yet powerful, neighbor. Losing the U.K. is not like losing Liechtenstein: The City of London is Europe's foremost financial center; the U.K. does around 600 billion pounds' worth of trade with the rest of the EU each year; and the country accounts for about 40% of the bloc's military might. There's an incentive to stay close.

The challenge for Barnier is that the U.K. is no longer just a partner but a "competitor on our own doorstep," as Angela Merkel put it. Inside the EU, the Brits had skin in the game and obligations to fulfill: The free flow of goods and capital, the adoption of tough standards on everything from children's toys to money laundering, and a common trade policy with 27 other countries. Outside the EU, the Brits will be free — in theory — to set their own rules. What if the Brexiters decide that the best way to replace the loss of frictionless trade with their biggest market is to slash taxes and take a far lighter touch on everything from financial regulation to food standards? Any EU deal would be a backdoor for trade dumping.

This is why the main preoccupation for Barnier is going to be about negotiating non-tariff barriers to U.K. trade — rules and regulations — rather than just the tariffs themselves. "Access to our markets will be proportional to the commitments taken to the common rules," he warned in October. If Boris Johnson wants a zero-quota, zero-tariff trade deal, that means zero divergence from the EU when it comes to the environment, or workers' rights, or even state aid. This isn't just a cheap tactic. It's a reflection of the fact that the EU's greatest asset is its single market and its ability to export its rules around the world. This so-called "Brussels Effect" would look more like a mirage if the Brexiters got their way.

Johnson, who this month secured a big parliamentary majority, won't make things easy. He has ruled out going beyond a very tight 11-month deadline for the trade talks, no doubt hoping the combination of time pressure on Brussels and the evaporation of anti-Brexit voices in the U.K. parliament will give him leverage. Johnson's swagger is also tied to Donald Trump's contempt for the EU and support for a U.S.-U.K. trade deal.

But Barnier has cards to play, too. The somber Savoyard, who frequently compares negotiations to mountain hikes, will stick to his patient approach. The likelihood is that, in one year's time, the U.K. economy will be no less entwined with the EU's. British financial and legal services exports to the bloc, worth around 60 billion pounds annually, will depend on whether the EU deems regulatory alignment close enough. Cross-border U.K. data flows, chemicals exports, and carmakers' U.K. supply chains will be similarly vulnerable. And Johnson's new converts in working-class Labour heartlands are unlikely to accept anyone putting a bonfire to workers' rights very well. Brexit alone won't puncture the Brussels Effect.

[Abridged]

**NORTH INDIA PREPARES FOR NEW YEAR'S ENVELOPED IN COLD SMOG**

Opaque, chilly smog blanketed northern India yesterday as low temperatures collided with hazardous levels of air pollution.

Across many cities in the region, including New Delhi, the capital, visibility was reduced to 200 meters, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Six people were killed when their car skidded off the road and tipped into a canal in a suburb of New Delhi, apparently because of the poor visibility, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

With temperatures dropping in New Delhi to 1 degree Celsius, street vendors, auto rickshaw drivers and people who sleep on the

streets of the capital wrapped themselves in hooded sweaters and blankets, and warmed their hands over small bonfires. The city was set to register its coldest December day since 1901.

The fires worsened New Delhi's notorious winter air pollution, with the air quality index — a measure of ozone, carbon dioxide and particulate matter — topping 500 at a monitor at the U.S. Embassy, 10 times what the World Health Organization considers safe.

The cold and fog were expected to continue through New Year's Day, government weather data showed.

AP PHOTO



Russian President Vladimir Putin

AP PHOTO



**Sudan** A court yesterday sentenced 27 members of the country's security forces to death for torturing and killing a detained protester during the uprising against longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir earlier this year.

**POLISH PM ACCUSES PUTIN OF LYING ABOUT OUTBREAK OF WWII**

VANESSA GERA

**P**OLAND'S prime minister said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin has been lying in remarks blaming Poland for the outbreak of World War II, and argued that Putin is doing it to deflect from recent Russian political failures.

Putin has said on several recent occasions that Poland bears responsibility for the outbreak of the war, deepening tensions between the two Slavic nations. On Friday the Russian ambassador to Poland was summoned to the Polish Foreign Ministry in protest.

World War II began in 1939 when Poland was invaded first by Nazi Germany, then by the Soviet Union two weeks later. The dual occupation came days after the two totalitarian states signed a pact with a secret protocol to carve up Poland and the Baltic states. Some 6 million Polish citizens were killed in the war.

"President Putin has lied about Poland on numerous occasions, and he has always done it deliberately," Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said in a statement. "It usually happens in a situation when the authorities in Moscow feel international pressure

caused by its actions. And this pressure is not on the historical stage but on the modern geopolitical scene."

Morawiecki pointed to several recent developments that he described as failures for Russia, including Russian athletes being suspended for doping and a failed attempt by the Kremlin "to fully subordi-

the country since Joseph Stalin.

Putin has lashed out in recent days against a resolution adopted by the European Parliament that says the Soviet Union bears responsibility for World War II alongside Germany. The Russian leader has called that "sheer nonsense."

Putin argues that collusion with Adolf Hitler by Western powers paved the way for World War II. He has heaped scorn on Poland, citing archival documents which he asserted show the Polish ambassador to Berlin praising Hitler's plans to rid Europe of Jews.

In one outburst, Putin denounced the ambassador as "scum" and "anti-Semitic swine."

Some opponents of Poland's conservative government have accused the authorities in Warsaw of being too slow and passive in their response to Russia.

Donald Tusk, a former Polish prime minister who was until recently the president of the European Council, urged unity among Poles.

"In view of President Putin's brazen lies and Russian propaganda, a joint position of the Polish authorities and the opposition is needed. This is not the place and time for an internal dispute," Tusk said on Twitter. **AP**

**" Putin has lied about Poland on numerous occasions, and he has always done it deliberately.**

MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI  
 POLAND'S PRIME MINISTER

**Russia-Iran** Iran's nuclear deal with world powers is in danger of "falling apart" without the compliance of the United States and the European Union, Russia's foreign minister warned yesterday after meeting with his Iranian counterpart in Moscow. The 2015 deal between Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for limits on its nuclear program. The U.S. withdrew from the accord last year and imposed crippling economic sanctions that block Iran from selling crude oil abroad.

**Russia** President Vladimir Putin called his U.S. President Donald Trump to thank him for intelligence that helped prevent terrorist acts as the country prepares to celebrate the New Year's holidays. While the Kremlin didn't provide any details in its statement, the Federal Security Service, or FSB, said it arrested two people in St. Petersburg who were planning attacks during the holidays based on information from the U.S. special services.

**Germany** Police said a person apparently fired several shots at a shop in central Berlin and an operation is under way. A tweet from police didn't specify whether anyone was hurt in the incident in the Friedrichstrasse area yesterday and didn't give any further information, other than to say that the apparent perpetrator wasn't identified.

**HOLIDAY TIMES**

Macau Daily Times will not be published during the holiday. The Times will be back on the stands on Friday January 3. However the MDT website will be updated with breaking news during the recess period. We wish our readers, advertisers and friends the best of times.